

About Video Data Bank

Founded at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) in 1976 at the inception of the media arts movement, Video Data Bank (VDB) is a leading resource in the United States for video by and about contemporary artists. Now celebrating its 40th anniversary year, the VDB Collection includes the work of more than 600 artists and 6,000 video art titles that describe the development of video as an art form originating in the late 1960's and continuing to the present. VDB makes its collection available to museums, galleries, educational institutions, libraries, cultural institutions and other exhibitors through a national and international distribution service. VDB works to foster a deeper understanding of video art and artists, and to broaden access and exposure to media art histories through its programs and activities. These include maintaining both analog and digital archives, preservation of historically important video art works, the commissioning of essays and texts that contextualize artists' work, the publication of curated programs and artists' monographs, and an extensive range of public programs.

Friends of EAI Membership 2016

Become a 2016 Friends of EAI Member at one of five levels and enjoy a range of wonderful benefits, including complimentary tickets to EAI on-site public programs and special access to the artists and works in the EAI collection. Membership helps to support our programs and services, including our online resources, educational outreach, and vital preservation activities. By becoming a Friend of EAI, you support the future of media art and artists. Memberships begin at \$40 (\$25 for students). For more information, and to become a member, please visit: www.eai.org/cartMembership.htm

About EAI

Celebrating our 45th anniversary in 2016, Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI) is a nonprofit arts organization that fosters the creation, exhibition, distribution, and preservation of moving image art. A New York-based international resource for media art and artists, EAI holds a major collection of over 3,500 new and historical media artworks, from groundbreaking early video by pioneering figures of the 1960s to new digital projects by today's emerging artists. EAI works closely with artists, museums, schools, and other venues worldwide to preserve and provide access to this significant archive. EAI services also include viewing access, educational initiatives, extensive online resources, technical facilities, and public programs such as artists' talks, screenings, and multimedia performances. EAI's Online Catalogue is a comprehensive resource on the artists and works in the EAI collection, and features expansive materials on media art's histories and current practices.

www.eai.org



Council on
the Arts



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Cover: *Psykho III The Musical*, Tom Rubnitz, 1985. Courtesy of Video Data Bank.

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“Edited at EAI”: Videos by Tom Rubnitz John Kelly in Conversation



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Electronic Arts Intermix



“Edited at EAI”: Videos by Tom Rubnitz

John Kelly in Conversation

EAI continues our 45th anniversary “Edited at EAI” series with an evening celebrating the work of Tom Rubnitz (1956-1992), whose deliriously camp genre parodies and music videos capture the anarchic spirit and talents of the 1980s East Village scene of Club 57 and the Pyramid Club. The rich body of work that Rubnitz edited at EAI includes TV spoofs, music videos, and the musical parody *Psykho III The Musical* (1985). Downtown performance and drag luminaries, such as Lady Bunny, Sister Dimension, John Kelly, Ann Magnuson, Hapi Phace, John Sex, and Tabboo! star in videos that can seem like screwball TV broadcasts from another dimension. Artist John Kelly, featured in *Psykho III The Musical* and the 1986 *Drag Queen Marathon* (as drag persona Dagmar Onassis), will be in conversation following the screening.

Special thanks to Video Data Bank in Chicago for their generous collaboration on this program. VDB, which celebrates its 40th anniversary this year, has been instrumental in preserving and distributing Tom Rubnitz’s video works.

Organized in conjunction with EAI’s 45th anniversary, the “Edited at EAI” series highlights a historically significant but less well-known area of EAI’s programs: EAI’s Editing Facility for artists, one of the first such creative workspaces for video in the United States.

Program

Made For TV, Tom Rubnitz, Ann Magnuson, 1984, 15 min, color, sound

Psykho III The Musical, Tom Rubnitz, 1985, 23 min, b&w and color, sound

John Sex: The True Story, Tom Rubnitz, 1983, 4:17 min, b&w and color, sound

Hustle with My Muscle, Tom Rubnitz, 1986, 4 min, color, sound

Drag Queen Marathon, Tom Rubnitz, 1986, 5 min, color, sound

The program will be followed by a conversation with John Kelly.

The works Rubnitz edited at EAI span multiple genres and spotlight many of the defining talents of 1980s downtown New York. Created with and starring performance artist and Club 57 manager Ann Magnuson, *Made for TV* (1984) artfully recreates the experience of channel-flipping, as it cuts between Magnuson in multiple guises, from housewife to televangelist to Nina Hagen/Lena Lovich style “scream queen” “Lina Hagendazovich.” *Psykho III The Musical* satirizes—and puts a decidedly queer gloss on—the original *Psycho* (1960), and features Pyramid stars John Kelly, Tabboo!, and Hapi Phace. Based on the stage musical conceived by Mark Oates (following the movie release of *Psycho II* (1983) and first performed at the Pyramid Club), its 1986 premiere was co-presented by EAI and PS122. Mock-rockumentary *John Sex: The True Story* (1983) gives a view of the eponymous Vegas-styled performance artist, seeking to answer such questions as, “Are you a unique blend of the Apollonian male ideal and Dionysiac orgiastic frenzy?” In the music video for his single “Hustle with My Muscle,” it is Sex doing the questioning: “Can you handle all the man below my belt?” Finally, *Drag Queen Marathon* finds Lady Bunny and fellow drag denizens of the Pyramid Club out on the town and turning heads from Lincoln Center to the Guggenheim to Soho.

Born in Chicago, **Tom Rubnitz** (1956-1992) captured the personalities and energy of the 1980s and early 90s East Village drag and performance scenes in videos that parodied pop culture and celebrated New York nightlife. His collaborators and stars in these videos included the B-52s, Lady Bunny, Ann Magnuson, RuPaul, John Sex, and David Wojnarowicz. Much of his work responds to and brilliantly parodies TV. *Made for TV*, which he made with Ann Magnuson, originally aired on PBS. Other TV parodies, such as his off-kilter cooking tutorial *Pickle Surprise* (1990), have gone on to viral success on YouTube, decades later. Rubnitz died from AIDS-related causes in 1992.

John Kelly is a choreographer, director, singer, artist and writer. His performances have been based on subjects ranging from autobiography, to cultural and political phenomenon such as the Berlin Wall, the Troubadours, the AIDS epidemic, and Expressionistic Film. He has created character studies based on historic figures such as Egon Schiele, Caravaggio, Antonin Artaud, Joni Mitchell, and Jean Cocteau. As a singer he has performed John Cage with the San Francisco Symphony; collaborated (as lyricist and director) and recorded with composer David Del Tredici; recorded with Laurie Anderson on “Life On A String”; on “Jazz Passengers In Love”; and performed with Antony and The Johnsons, Dudley Saunders, Carol Lipnik, and Chris Rael. His visual art has been exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art; Alexander Gray Associates; The New Museum for Contemporary Art; PS 1; MIT List Visual Art Center; Institute for Contemporary Art, Philadelphia; Art In General; Momenta Arts; The Kitchen; The American Academy in Rome; FotoGrafia-Festival Internazionale di Roma; MACRO Museo d’Arte Contemporanea di Roma; Biagiotti Progetto Arte; the Saratoga Art Museum; and Harvard University.